

Kent County Report

Passing the Torch:

Chair Koorndyk moves seats; Board Selects Jim Saalfeld Chair

During the Board of Commissioners' meeting on December 17, Dan Koorndyk reflected with a sense of pride on the three years he sat in the Chair's seat. "I'm glad we have different perspectives from the County, so everyone gets to weigh in," Koorndyk said to the Board. "Whether it's popular or not, if something needs to be done, we can tackle it and get it done." Chair Koorndyk relinquished the Chair seat but continues to serve as District 18's Commissioner.



The Board voted unanimously to name Commissioners Jim Saalfeld (*photo, left*) as Chair and Shana Shroll as Vice-Chair for 2016. Chair Saalfeld had served as Vice-Chair over the past three years. Commissioner Carol Hennessy was unanimously re-elected to the role of Minority Vice-Chair. Chair Saalfeld appointed Vice-Chair Shroll to continue as Chair of the Legislative and Human Resources Committee, and Commissioner Carol Hennessy to hold her

role as Vice-Chair. Chair Saalfeld selected Commissioner Dick Vander Molen to chair the Finance and Physical Resources Committee, and selected Commissioner Diane Jones as Vice-Chair.

Chair Saalfeld said he looks forward to 2016, a year that he expects new challenges but also many achievements. "The County has established itself as a leader of collaboration with its fellow governments, the business community and philanthropic organizations," Chair Saalfeld said. "This will be a priority for me. Because funding sources are not what they used to be, we must find ways to cooperate and collaborate with our partners to reduce the cost of government while delivering the services that the citizens expect."



Flu Season is Here!

Thousands of people in the U.S. will be hospitalized this year because of influenza. This virus can be deadly to the very young, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. Kent County Health Department offers injections and flu mist, and now accepts Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan!

Check out
www.StickItToTheFlu.com
or call 616.632.7200

What Does a Commissioner Do?

~ From Your Commissioners

Often, we Commissioners get questions like these: What do Kent County Commissioners do? What are your responsibilities?

We are the chief legislative and policy-making body of Kent County Government.

Our 19-member Board of Commissioners serve two-year terms, elected by voters in the districts where we live. We are responsible for making sure State-mandated services are provided to our residents. We work 10-20 hours a month based on our roles. Most Commissioners also have full-time jobs in addition to their respective office.

Commissioners' duties include:

- Adopting the annual County budget (\$382.6 million in 2016);
- Raising the money to fund the County's operations by levying property taxes, setting fees, selling bonds or borrowing;
- Reviewing the Performance Measures and Performance Management of County departments;
- Working with other county and local units of government and the non-profit and private sectors to collaborate on service delivery;
- Determining the sites of County buildings, and purchasing or selling County-owned property and facilities;
- Appointing citizen members to and serving on County boards, commissions and committees, which provide advice and direction for significant County services (i.e. Community Health Advisory Committee, Veteran's Affairs Committee);
- Establishing an annual Legislative Agenda.

We are in charge of selecting a County Administrator/Controller who supervises the day-to-day operations of County departments. For the past 20 years, that role has been held by Daryl Delabbio. You can find your commissioner here: www.accesskent.com/Departments/BOC/.



Airport Agreements Signed

The Gerald R. Ford Airport Authority (GFIAA) and Board of Commissioners signed three agreements necessary for federal approval of the Airport having its own governance. Kent County has owned and governed the Airport for 52 years.

The agreements are required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to transfer control of the Airport from the County to the Authority. They include a Lease and Asset Transfer Agreement, an Assignment and Assumption Agreement, and an Intergovernmental Services Agreement, which continues some County services and operational support for up to 30 months from the effective date.

The process to transfer the Airport to an Authority started in 2014 and required State legislative approval. "These agreements took more than just the work of the current Airport Authority board; credit goes to the previous Airport board for having the vision and wisdom to prioritize this effort," said Kent County Commissioner Roger Morgan, who is also the Chair of the GFIAA Board. "We also had great, bi-partisan support from our local State lawmakers and the Office of the Governor through this process. This is truly a watershed moment for Gerald R. Ford International Airport."

The agreements would take effect upon the FAA's approval of the transfer. The FAA decision is expected by July 1, 2016.



New Judge Approved for Circuit Court

The Board of Commissioners approved adding an additional 17th Circuit Court Judgeship starting in 2017. The vote accepts the recommendation of the State Court Administrator's Office (SCAO) which is required to evaluate the State's judicial resources every two years.



In August 2015 Board Chair Koorndyk appointed a Judicial Resources Subcommittee (Chaired by Commissioner Dick Vander Molen, with Commissioners Mandy Bolter, Dave Bulkowski, Roger Morgan, and Jim Saalfeld). The group met with Circuit and District Court Judges, as well as Kent County's Prosecutor and Sheriff to evaluate the SCAO's 2015 Report, which called for an additional Circuit Court Judge. The Subcommittee recommended adding a Circuit Court Judge, as well as two Circuit Court Clerks, two Corrections Officers, one Assistant Prosecuting Attorney and upgrading the role of a Clerk in the Prosecutor's Office.

The additional staff for the Prosecutor and Sheriff's Office are required to support the increased activity levels associated with an additional judgeship. Additional Corrections Officers are required to provide security for the anticipated increase in court time and to maintain a safe environment. "The Subcommittee understood that security is essential at the courts," said Jim Saalfeld, 2016 Board Chair and member of the Judicial Resources Subcommittee. "Adding two Corrections Officers to courthouse security will make it safer for inmates, witnesses and court staff, and allow for a more efficient transfer of inmates back and forth from the Jail to the court."

Kent County residents will select the Circuit Court Judge in the general election in November 2016. The State provides for the Judge's salary and certain benefits, but the County is required to provide worker's compensation and health and life insurance. Kent County will have to fund the additional staff required, as well as provide for the facility needs for the new judgeship.



Lease Extended for Arbor Circle Site

The Board of Commissioners approved extending the County's lease agreement with Arbor Circle Corporation last month. The new agreement runs through the year 2021 for the property at 1101 Ball Avenue NE, Grand Rapids. The site is next to the Kent County Juvenile Detention Center.

The County approved a 50-year lease with what was then called the "Child Guidance Clinic" for the property in December 1965. That lease expired on January 3, 2016. Arbor Circle requested to extend the lease as it considers building a new facility on land acquired by Arbor Circle Corporation. The new agreement extends the lease term to December 31, 2021, with options to terminate the agreement earlier if requested. Arbor Circle may also request up to two additional one-year extensions.

In 1996, "Child Guidance Clinic" and several other organizations merged to become the Arbor Circle Corporation. In 2014, the center assisted more than 11,000 clients through mental health, substance abuse, and family counseling, education, and prevention programs.

Videos Promote Diversity, Services Provided by County

Diversity and Inclusion Matter

Kent County supports diversity and inclusion in our workforce.

The Kent County Health Department in conjunction with Strong Beginnings and Healthy Kent is offering workshops to help engage the community in learning through dialogue about improving community health.

These two-day workshops are free and open to the public.

Learn more at:
www.accessKent.com/HealthEquity

In today's competitive job market, hiring and retaining a diverse, innovative workforce is critical. Working for Kent County is all about public service. The videos "We Are Kent County" and "Kent County: Life, Well Run" show

our employee's dedication to service, diversity and inclusion. They will be used during new employee orientations, job fairs, shared on social media and accessKent.com, and played on local access TV before and after County Commission meetings are broadcast.

Videos highlight the members of the Kent County Cultural Insight Council, Undersheriff Michelle Young, Grand Rapids Public Schools Superintendent Teresa Weatherall Neal, Diana Sieger, President of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, and Doug Small, CEO Of Experience Grand Rapids. The videos have been placed on a newly-created Youtube.com channel for Kent County, which is part of our strategy to increase our social media presence.

See the videos online:

[Kent County: Life, Well Run](#)



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Kent County Mission Statement

The mission of Kent County government is to be an effective and efficient steward in delivering quality services for our diverse community. Our priority is to provide mandated services, which may be enhanced and supplemented by additional services to improve the quality of life for all our citizens within the constraints of sound fiscal policy.